



# Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## *Bellingham, WA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

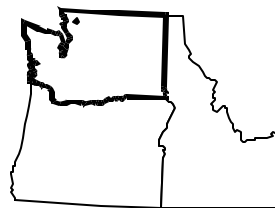
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Bellingham for a Brownfields Pilot. The city is located on Bellingham Bay and is situated 90 miles north of Seattle and 60 miles south of Vancouver, British Columbia. The city's population is approximately 62,000 and the unemployment rate is 6.4 percent, which is higher than the state average. The median family income is \$46,000. However, more than half of the residents in the project area have incomes of 80 percent or less than the local median. The project area is situated on Whatcom Creek, which flows into Bellingham Bay, a waterbody which supports a complex marine habitat.

The Holly Street Landfill project area comprises 41 acres of the city's historic Old Town district and represents a key link between the waterfront and downtown Bellingham. The project site has 25 separate property owners, including the city, and is made up of many different parcels of land, including a large waterfront park. Since the turn of the century, residual materials from dredging, coal mining, and municipal waste have filled in the former tidelands at the edge of the bay and turned them into upland areas. The extent of the resulting contamination in the fill material and on the both privately and publicly owned properties is largely unknown; however, two properties

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



Bellingham, Washington

Date of Announcement:  
June 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets 41 acres of the Old Town area located between Bellingham Bay and downtown.

#### Contacts:

City of Bellingham  
Planning and Community  
Development Department  
(360) 676-6880

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 10  
(206) 553-6523

Visit the EPA Region 10 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://epainotes1.rtpnc.epa.gov:7777/r10/cleanup.nsf/webpage/Brownfields>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

in the project area are listed as contaminated sites by the Washington Department of Ecology. Whatcom Creek, which bisects the project area and is an important estuary where fresh and salt water mix to provide habitat for a variety of marine life—particularly salmon—is threatened by the groundwater and migrating contamination.

## OBJECTIVES

The City of Bellingham and its community members are seeking to redevelop Old Town and create a safe area that connects the bay to the rest of the city. The city has committed to this process by investing \$1.5 million for public facilities at the park in the project area, adding streetscape improvements, and allocating \$80,000 in seed money for this project. Additionally, the Port of Bellingham is receiving EPA funds for the assessment of a brownfields site adjacent to the project area. The Pilot will work closely with the Port of Bellingham Pilot and with the Washington Department of Ecology's Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot Project to share experiences and redevelop this vital waterfront area. The city's overall goals are to contain environmental risks to the habitat and community, and revitalize Old Town into an economically and aesthetically viable section of the city that can serve as the link between the bay and downtown.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting environmental testing and collecting data regarding the magnitude of necessary cleanup actions;
- Developing geotechnical, economic, and land use constraints data;
- Establishing an effective public outreach process; and
- Providing decision-making opportunities regarding cleanup approaches and redevelopment opportunities throughout the process for the city, landowners, and the public.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.